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PERSPECTIVES

ON THE GTA

A PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE FOR THE GREATER TORONTO AREA

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THE OGTA - Pg 6

Listening to valuable workshop comments

FAST FACTS

Shaping Growth in the GTA

- Capital expenditures by public authorities in the GTA represent a significant investment in the region. In 1990, school boards collectively spent about \$500 million, while local and regional municipalities made capital expenditures of \$1.5 billion.
- Between 1981 and 1986 about 20,600 ha of agricultural land were converted to urban use, consisting of scattered industrial/commercial development, low density residential development and estate residential development.
- Lester B. Pearson Airport, directly and indirectly contributes over \$4 billion annually to the GTA economy.
- Longer trips, more trips per capita and increased car ownership levels has outstripped population growth in the GTA.
- Residents of the GTA travel on average 4 km further to work today than they did in 1961.
- The cost of employee benefits – like medical insurance, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance and social security – is about 10 per cent of Ontario's business payroll compared to about 25 per cent in Illinois, Michigan, New York, California and Ohio.
- New transportation infrastructure can take up to 18 years from the time of its proposal to be commissioned for operation.

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Perspectives on the GTA is directed to people who are interested in helping the Office for the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA) develop an action plan to manage the GTA's future growth.

The newsletter discusses how we can better plan for the social, environmental and economic well-being of the GTA and how you can play a role in helping us meet these challenges. This third issue particularly concentrates on the consultation process and the future steps that need to be taken in order to develop an action plan that ensures continued growth and prosperity for the Greater Toronto Area.

If you are not already on our mailing list and would like to receive future issues of the newsletter, please complete the form on the back page.

Mike Toombs, Editor, *Perspectives on the GTA*

THE MARKHAM CENTRE STUDY

A vision for creating an identity

WORKING TOWARDS A BETTER FUTURE

The next steps of the GTA vision process

MINISTER'S LETTER

Ruth Grier, Minister responsible for the OGTA



I have been a pleasure for me to bear the discussion of GTA 2021 - A Working Document and Shaping Growth in the GTA at the five regional workshops held in each region of the GTA this fall. I was delighted to have an opportunity to meet more than 600 local officials and citizens at these sessions.

From the questions and comments I heard, balancing provincial leadership and local responsibility remains a major concern. The work of the OGTA is very consistent with the direction proposed by the Sewell Commission on Planning and Development Reform. The Commission is proposing that the province set planning within a system of clearer rules. This approach will, I believe, foster a constructive partnership between the municipalities and the province.

We have made considerable progress in developing the policy framework for the GTA. This newsletter outlines

the key components of the proposed policy which will be released as a draft for comment next spring. Once comments have been received and a final policy approved, we can be certain that future growth will be consistent with our values of environmental integrity, economic vitality and social equity.

The next challenge is to ensure that in coming months many more people become involved in this consultation about the future of the GTA. The Markham Centre is one innovative approach described in this newsletter and the outcome is in line with our GTA vision. The morning I spent with young people in Durham was also very stimulating. I hope other schools will take advantage of this educational program. Participation of the public and a thorough discussion of the issues will help to ensure that the GTA remains an attractive place to live and work.

Ruth Grier,
Minister responsible for the
Office for the Greater Toronto Area

THE GTA

The Greater Toronto Area

Almost four million people, 40 per cent of the population of Ontario, live in what is commonly called the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). This area is composed of 35 area municipalities including Metropolitan Toronto and four regional municipalities – Halton, Peel, York and Durham.

The Office for the Greater Toronto Area is responsible for co-ordinating the Provincial Government's policies, programs and projects designed to ensure that the Greater Toronto Area remains environmentally and economically attractive as it manages growth.



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THE OGTA LISTENS TO VALUABLE WORKSHOP COMMENTS

Regional workshops generated spirited discussions between the province and 700 municipal representatives at five day-long meetings held throughout October and November in Peel, York, Durham, Halton and Metro Toronto. Comments and suggestions were made on how both sides can collectively work together to plan and implement a strategic action plan for managing growth in the Greater Toronto Area.

The Honourable Ruth Grier, Minister responsible for the OGTA; Elizabeth McLaren, the OGTA's Assistant Deputy Minister; and Gerry Fitzpatrick, Manager, Provincial Planning Policy Branch of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, updated attendees on significant trends in the GTA, reviewed planning efforts to date, and provided an opportunity for participants to comment on what should constitute a provincial planning policy. Representatives from the local media, including cable TV, provided full coverage of the day's events.



PEEL REGIONAL WORKSHOP

"We're hearing loud and clear that municipalities and interest groups want more time to study and formulate their comments back to us," says McLaren. "As a result, we're extending our timetables until February so they can respond to the six working group reports and other documents we've produced."

Hazel McCallion, Mayor of the City of Mississauga, articulated one view heard often at the sessions. "Long-range planning is a necessity. We wouldn't be in the situation we're in today if we initiated a visioning process 30 years ago. However, the process shouldn't deter us from dealing with current situations such as overcrowding in schools, traffic intensification on the highways, taxes and waste disposal. Addressing current issues must happen simultaneously with long-range planning."



HALTON REGIONAL WORKSHOP

Consensus among workshop participants is that the GTA vision is a good one. Most attendees recognize that long-range planning is needed and that producing a provincial planning policy is an immense undertaking.

Long-range planning is particularly important with regard to infrastructure. It was noted that combined provincial and municipal investment in infrastructure is about \$2.3 billion annually. Given that it can take up to 18 years from initial concept to completion of major infrastructure projects, it is clearly evident that we have to plan and budget today for tomorrow.

"One can hardly agree that long-range planning isn't appropriate," comments Don Hadden, Mayor of the Township of Brock. "It's certainly difficult to do, but without it, we're unprepared for the future. My only hope is that the province is listening to us and wants our input. I would hate to think this is just a public relations exercise and the province has its own vision it wants us to approve."



METRO TORONTO WORKSHOP

"We're certainly gratified that municipal governments understand the need for a policy," says McLaren. "We realize there will always be differences between the two levels of government, but we have to get past those differences and deal with the long-term issues that are so important to our future. We hope the consultation process will achieve this."

Participants also raised many concerns outside of the visioning process and stated the need for more local government input as well as involvement from federal government, school boards and the business community. McLaren says the OGTA is currently looking for ways to get more community groups involved in all aspects of the process.



YORK REGIONAL WORKSHOP

The provincial planning policy will help each region prepare for the two million people expected to emigrate to the GTA by the year 2021. A planning team consisting of provincial and municipal staff will be established to write the draft policy (see key components on opposite page).

The draft provincial planning policy will be circulated to each municipality in the spring of 1993 for comment and will be officially released next fall.



DURHAM REGIONAL WORKSHOP

THE MARKHAM CENTRE STUDY

A vision for creating an identity

A week-long charrette (brainstorming session), hosted by the Town of Markham this past September, launched a creative, participatory planning exercise for a new urban town centre in Markham. The project will be a community focal point and bring a mixed-use core area to a portion of the Highway 7 corridor.

An international team of consultants facilitated the five-day brainstorming session for interested parties and landowners, providing them with a forum to contribute to the preparation of a Markham Centre land use plan.

The charrette focused on the Markham Centre Study, a document outlining the principles and vision for creating an identifiable and vibrant focal point for the town.

"Many different views and opinions emerged," says Lorne McCool, Commissioner of Planning and Development for the Town of Markham. "The advantage of gathering so much information so quickly was that it produced a burst of creative activity and resulted in a totally co-ordinated preliminary design."

"Approximately 400 interested attendees allowed for the detailed planning to begin on some parts of the plan. We now have a proposal for the main structure of the town centre. This will be explored more fully during the second charrette and, no doubt, will be revised and refined in significant ways," continues McCool.

Municipal officials are anticipating continued growth in Markham, resulting in an additional 39,000 industrial and office jobs by 2011, and the need for up to an additional 34,000 dwelling units. With a view to managing urban area expansion, Markham is proposing to pursue a town centre intensification model of development.

Markham's Urban Area Expansion Study says there is an opportunity to create a higher density, compact urban form in Markham, not only to serve as the town's "centre," but also to reflect the nodal concept for the GTA as a whole.

The study area for the Markham Centre (890 hectares in total) extends from Highway 404 to McCowan Road, and from the future Highway 407 alignment to the north side of the Highway 7 corridor. Existing urban development lies to the north and south, and much of the study area is presently vacant or in agricultural use.

Based on current thinking, Markham Centre will have a defined core area of approximately 100 hectares, providing a

mix of office, retail, cultural, recreational and high density residential uses. The core area could accommodate up to 11,000 dwelling units and create 33,000 employment opportunities, of which 75 per cent will be office employment. The planning process will ensure appropriate integration of the Centre with adjacent natural and urban systems.

The periphery of the Markham Centre will include a business park for 6,250 industrial and office jobs, and 3,750 medium density residential units, while the balance of land will remain in existing uses.

Improvements to current GO service and to existing public transit in the area proposed for the Markham Centre is ultimately required. In addition, the proposed Highway 407 route, located south of the site, will provide the necessary transit infrastructure needed to make Markham Centre accessible.

Markham has incorporated a variety of sound planning principles in its study, including:

- a mixed-use core area – providing residential units in close proximity to employment opportunities, to reduce automobile dependency;
- a grid street pattern and hierarchy of streets – to foster a sense of cohesion and to encourage growth in logical increments;
- economization of land – to maximize the amount of open space and optimize the visual quality;
- networks of pedestrian routes, green spaces; and
- compatible and consistent street frontages.

These principles complement provincial objectives for urban form in the GTA and will help ensure that Markham develops as a healthy urban node. The OGTA also sees the Markham Centre plan as an example of a local leadership in implementing a new paradigm in urban growth management – keeping development more compact and minimizing incursions into good farmland.

"What the plan proposes is a different way of building communities, but more marketable than the standard office park and shopping mall. We would like to see lower-rise apartment buildings facing the Rouge River greenway, so they help create the town flavor and, at the same time, provide visual enjoyment for everyone," says McCool.

STUDENTS SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE GTA



throughout the GTA to provide a shorter teacher-delivered unit beginning this fall.

"The objective of the educational program," says Mike Toombs, Policy Coordinator with the OGTA, "is to provide students with on-going exposure to information and issues relating to growth management in the GTA."

"Once developed, the program will be consistent with the objectives of the Ontario curriculum. In fact, the program should provide students with a clear understanding of the GTA and its regional municipalities, issues that will affect their future, and the necessary information needed to help participate fully in the GTA's development," explains Toombs.

The program will be implemented in two phases. The first phase will be a "visioning" lesson which allows students to create an image of their own ideal communities and encourages them to discuss the challenges facing the GTA in becoming this ideal community.

Approximately two million more people are expected to arrive in the Greater Toronto Area within the next 30 years. That doesn't give us much time to build essential services such as roads, transit and schools. In fact, it can take up to 18 years to create infrastructure such as sewers and subway systems.

Although we can't avoid the many short-term infrastructure and development decisions which have to be made almost daily by municipalities, we have to plan for the future to avoid the mistakes of the past. We want young people in the GTA to inherit an area that respects the natural environment, contributes to a strong provincial economy and provides a superior quality of life for residents.

With this in mind, the OGTA, in conjunction with municipal governments, is developing a strategic action plan to help manage the growth of the GTA. As part of the consultation process, students in intermediate and senior grades are being asked to provide suggestions on how we can best provide for the future population.



A successful educational workshop has already taken place at a Durham Region high school in March. Because of the significant number of valuable comments and suggestions generated, commitment has been made to school boards

on all aspects of our communities.

The classroom sessions are just one facet of the OGTA's community outreach program. The OGTA is also consulting the general public, community groups and municipal and regional councillors and staff to stimulate discussion of growth management issues. This, in addition to reviewing detailed reports of six working groups, will help the OGTA develop a sound action plan that will have a lasting impact on all aspects of our communities.

If you would like to participate in the OGTA's educational program, please contact the editor at the address listed on the back page of this newsletter.

WORKING TOWARDS A BETTER FUTURE

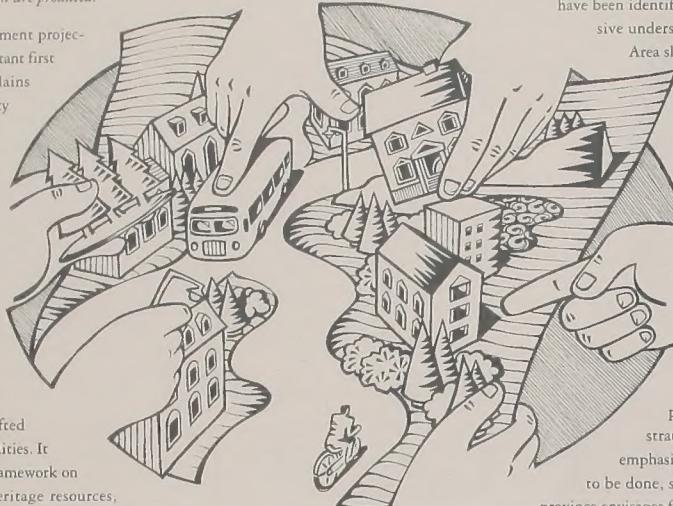
The next steps of the GTA vision process



Managing the expected growth in the GTA involves consideration of an enormous number of variables — the availability of jobs and housing, upkeep, expansion and servicing road and transit services, the provision of adequate water and sewer infrastructure, and the development of parks and recreation facilities. Although the OGTA has done a significant amount of work in these areas, more consultation needs to happen before the elements of the strategic action plan are produced.

"Revisiting population and employment projections for the 1991 census is an important first step in developing the plan," explains Elizabeth McLaren, Assistant Deputy Minister of the OGTA. "Knowing approximately how many people are expected to arrive in the GTA will tell us how much land is required and what infrastructure, such as roads and transit, we'll need in place. While we are revisiting employment and population forecasts, we also have to begin developing an urban form policy and a Capital Project Requirements Plan."

The urban form policy will be drafted jointly by the province and municipalities. It will provide municipalities with a framework on how to preserve greenlands and heritage resources, implement a system of corridors and nodes based on transit and mixed land uses, and make efficient use of existing infrastructure, while deciding what new hard and soft infrastructure is required to support the nodes. This policy must be developed jointly, so that provincial ministries and regional and local municipalities understand the nature of their responsibilities (see sidebar on page 3).



Once these two steps are completed, the regions and the municipalities can begin to identify their growth nodes.

The Capital Project Requirements Plan will be developed with help from the Greater Toronto Co-ordinating Committee (GTCC) and relevant government ministries, such as the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of the Environment. This plan will inventory infrastructure such as roads, water and sewer systems. Work done on this plan will commence as soon as the urban growth nodes have been identified, giving us a clear and comprehensive understanding of what the Greater Toronto Area should look like.

"As you can see, there's still a number of issues that need to be resolved," comments McLaren. "We see the regions and municipalities playing a critical role in developing the strategy for growth. The province welcomes official responses from municipalities or regions on any or all of the reports we have prepared by February of 1993."

During the next year, the OGTA will continue to review comments and work with the regional municipalities to produce the elements of the strategic action plan. These elements will emphasize a definitive statement of what needs to be done, so municipalities will know what the province envisages for the Greater Toronto Area.

"There won't be one document entitled 'The Strategic Action Plan,'" comments McLaren. "It isn't a master plan, but rather a series of action steps that will lead to the implementation of the vision. All of the necessary components will be circulated for public debate and implemented incrementally over the next few years."

REACHING ETHNIC COMMUNITIES THROUGH BROAD PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The OGTA has been given the responsibility of communicating with more than 700,000 people in Metropolitan Toronto and in the Greater Toronto Area, whose mother tongue is something other than English. In an effort to reach this diverse group, the OGTA recently used radio and television stations, newspapers and magazines which serve ethnic communities, to discuss the province's growth management strategy for the year 2021.

Shortly after the release of *Shaping Growth in the GTA*, the OGTA decided to redouble its efforts and reach ethnic communities through their own media. A comprehensive news release, background article written by Canadian Scene's Ben Viccaro and a glossary which explains in plain language such concepts as corridors, nodes and infrastructure, were translated into 13 languages and distributed to

approximately 400 ethnic media outlets. Copies of this package can be obtained by contacting the OGTA.

In addition, the OGTA mailed copies of *Shaping Growth in the GTA* as well as a copy of the Canadian Scene material in one or more of the appropriate 13 languages (including Urdu, Punjabi and Korean) to more than 60 ethnic media outlets serving the GTA. By press time, information on *Shaping Growth in the GTA* had been picked up by publications as diverse as *Corriere Canadese* (Italian) and *Sing Tao Jui Pao* (Chinese).

The OGTA is also planning a special workshop on managing the growth of the GTA for representatives of ethnic community media so they can have the opportunity to discuss with OGTA staff and the Minister's office how the provincial government's plans will benefit their communities.

COMMENT CARD

I wish to get involved in planning the future of the Greater Toronto Area by:

- receiving the newsletter — Perspectives on the GTA, (if you are already on the mailing list, there is no need to send in the order form again);
- receiving a copy of the *GTA 2021: The Challenge of Our Future, A Working Document*;
- receiving a copy of *Shaping Growth in the GTA*; and
- inviting an OGTA representative to speak to my group about the future of the Greater Toronto Area.

Comments:

Name

Street

City

Province

Postal Code

Telephone (home)

Telephone (business)

Send to: OGTA, 10 Bay Street, Suite 300, Toronto, Ontario M5J 2R8

Phone: (416) 314-6400 Fax: (416) 314-6440